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Citation for published version:

Fry, D & Petrowski, N 2016, *A Secondary Analysis of Data from Childline Zimbabwe*. Understanding Violence Against Children in Zimbabwe Data Series, no. 2, Unicef, Harare.

Link:

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A SECONDARY ANALYSIS OF DATA FROM **CHILDLINE ZIMBABWE**

Understanding Violence Against Children in
Zimbabwe Data Series



THE UNIVERSITY
of EDINBURGH



unicef 

Acknowledgements: This report has been prepared by Nicole Petrowski (consultant) and Dr. Deborah Fry, from the University of Edinburgh as part of the Zimbabwe Childline Study for Improved Monitoring commissioned by UNICEF Zimbabwe.

Gratitude goes to the following Childline Zimbabwe staff who provided valuable insights and ideas, contributed their time and effort towards data extraction, and who work with tireless dedication to protect and support the rights of children in Zimbabwe: Ygainnia Hamandawana, Ratidzai Moyo, Mandlenkosi Zikali, Daphne Chinyemba and Maureen Kambarami. Thanks are also extended to the National Director of Childline Zimbabwe, Stella Motsi, for her willingness to be engaged in the process.

The work undertaken to prepare this report would not have been possible without the support and input from several key UNICEF Zimbabwe staff: Noriko Izumi, Line Baago Rasmussen and Jeremiah Chinodya. Appreciation is also extended to Mary Catherine Maternowska (UNICEF) who was the vision behind the Childline Analysis and who is leading a global research agenda on violence prevention at the UNICEF Office of Research alongside Alina Potts. Special thanks also goes to Eilidh Moir (University of Edinburgh).

Suggested citation: The University of Edinburgh (UoE), Childline Zimbabwe and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) Zimbabwe. *A Secondary Analysis of Childline Zimbabwe Data*. Harare: UNICEF, 2016

This publication is part of the *Understanding Violence Against Children in Zimbabwe Series*. Children from all parts of society may be exposed to physical, sexual and psychological violence, abuse and exploitation. This is a growing concern due to the negative health and developmental consequences for children and society both at present and in the future. While evidence is relatively limited on the extent of violence and abuse, studies are beginning to suggest that it is a significant problem in Zimbabwe. The *Understanding Violence Against Children in Zimbabwe Series* aim to contribute to this growing body of evidence to understand better why violence against children is happening and what is driving it. The Series draws data largely from the UNICEF-supported interventions where diverse information is being collected as part of programme monitoring. The Series attempt to give it a closer look at the data and information at hand and dig deeper the issue of violence against children in Zimbabwe. We hope to generate evidence, create deeper understanding of the issue and stimulate discussions – all to better inform programming to address violence against children in Zimbabwe.

This paper was produced by the University of Edinburgh for UNICEF Zimbabwe in March 2016. The opinions and statements presented here do not necessarily represent those of UNICEF.

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KEY FINDINGS

- In 2014, Childline received a total of 15,446 reports; half were received by the helpline and the other half came in through one of its 31 drop-in centres located across the country.
- Fifty-four per cent of all reports received in 2014 were about abuse, at a rate of 123.9 reports per 100,000 children; the remaining 46 per cent were reports of “children in need”, at a rate of 106.9 per 100,000 children.
- Slightly more than one in three (39 per cent) reports of abuse received in 2014 were about sexual abuse, followed by neglect (25 per cent), physical abuse (22 per cent), emotional abuse (12 per cent) and bullying (2 per cent).
- Among all reports of abuse in 2014, around two in three (70 per cent) were reports about girls compared to one in three about boys (30 per cent).
- Among girls reported to have experienced some form of abuse in 2014, the majority were reported as having experienced sexual abuse while the largest proportion of reports received about boys were for reasons of neglect.
- Of all reports of abuse received by the helpline for both sexes in 2014, around one in three were reports about children between the ages of 13 and 15 years.
- Fifty-five per cent of abuse reports about girls received by the helpline in 2014 were about those aged 13-17 years compared to 36 per cent of abuse reports made about boys for this age group.
- Reports of sexual abuse received by the helpline in 2014 were more common among older age groups than younger ones, while neglect and physical abuse became less commonly reported.
- Across all age groups of boys, the most commonly reported forms of abuse received by the helpline in 2014 were physical abuse and neglect; reports related to sexual abuse against girls increased with age.
- At most drop-in centres in 2014, reports of abuse about girls were more likely than those about boys.
- There was a 21 per cent increase in the number of reports received by Childline between 2011 and 2014.
- Between 2011 and 2014, there was a 163 per cent increase in reports received by the helpline while there was a 20 per cent decrease in reports received by drop-in centres over this same time period.
- Reports about sexual abuse received by Childline (through both the helpline and drop-in centres) showed a 100 per cent increase during the four-year period from 2011 to 2014.
- Reports of abuse received about girls remained consistently higher than those received about boys between 2011 and 2014.
- Childline has seen a 70 and 80 per cent increase in the number of reports of physical abuse against boys and girls, respectively, between 2011 and 2014; there has also been a 109 per cent increase in the number of reports of sexual abuse against girls during this time period.



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BACKGROUND

Childline Zimbabwe is a child focused, not-for-profit community-based organization (CBO), founded in 1997 by Soroptimist International of Zimbabwe, an International Women's Service organization with members in 115 countries. Childline provides therapeutic and educational services to all children in the country under the age of 18.¹ The overall aim of Childline is to listen, comfort and protect children in need. The mission of Childline is:

- To respond to all children in distress, to counsel, comfort and protect all children in Zimbabwe; and
- To promote, foster and encourage the protection and care of all children in Zimbabwe.

The main service provided by Childline is free and confidential counselling, accessed by children directly or by members of the community with concerns about children via three methods:

- A free, confidential 24-hour 116 helpline accessible from all phones (both landlines and mobiles regardless of network) in Zimbabwe, subject to GSM coverage in the area. Childline's two call centres are located in Harare and Bulawayo, and are operated by trained volunteers providing counselling in three languages: English, Shona and Ndebele;
- Free postal service; and
- Thirty-one community-based drop-in centres located across the country (covering all 10 provinces) operated by qualified social workers and counsellors supported by trained community volunteer counsellors.

Other services include:

- Follow-up home visits by social workers or community volunteer counsellors in their local districts for reports of child abuse or neglect received through the helpline or postal service. This service is provided in partnership with the Government's Department of Child Welfare and Protection and police officers in the Victim Friendly Unit. The social workers and community volunteer counsellors often provide ongoing counselling and support to children and/or their families to ensure the safety, appropriate care and healthy development of children; and
- Advocacy activities at both local and national levels to promote the prevention of child abuse, exploitation and neglect and raise awareness of children's rights. Childline works with the media, private-sector partners and various government ministries and also provides trainings on a regular basis to promote children's rights and the safeguarding of children across the country.

Childline is run by a National Director appointed by a Board of Trustees. The Director is supported by a team of 35 dedicated professionals and over 150 volunteers to ensure the efficient running of Childline serving the most vulnerable children in Zimbabwe. Childline Zimbabwe is an active member of Child Helpline International (CHI), which is a global network of telephone helplines and outreach services for children and young people.

¹ Although persons under the age of 18 are considered children under Zimbabwean law, Childline will respond to any young person requesting assistance.

OBJECTIVES

The purpose of the present secondary analysis was to utilize existing data collected by Childline Zimbabwe through its 116 helpline and drop-in centres to describe the current situation with regards to the number and nature of reports received by Childline, including the different forms of violence and abuse against children and the sex and age of children who are reported to be victims of violence. Additionally, trends in the number and nature of reports received by Childline, the types of abuse reported and selected characteristics of child victims will also be described.

Research questions

To analyse Childline's available helpline and drop-in centre data in order to describe:

1. What is the number of reports received by the helpline and drop-in centres in 2014 at the national level? What proportion came in via the helpline versus the drop-in centres? Have these increased or decreased over time?
2. What proportion of reports received are related to violence and abuse versus children in need at national level in 2014? Have these increased or decreased over time?
3. Of those cases about violence and abuse, what proportions are related to different categories of abuse and violence in 2014? (e.g., physical, sexual, emotional, neglect and bullying). Has this changed over time?
4. What are the profiles of children reported to have experienced violence and abuse in 2014? (e.g., age and sex). Has this changed over time?
5. Are there variations in the number and types of reports received at different drop-in centre locations?

METHODOLOGY

Definitions

Childline Zimbabwe utilizes the set of definitions put forth by Child Helpline International (CHI) in its Glossary of Terms document,² as described below (unless otherwise noted):

Child: All human beings under the age of 18.³

Abuse: All forms of harm directed toward a child by an adult or another child with more power and/or authority. While there are many forms of abuse, including negligence and commercial exploitation, there are three main types: physical, emotional and sexual. Child abuse may take place in many settings: home, school, institutional, etc.

Violence: The intentional use of power to control a child through obvious and less obvious ways, including any actions or words intended to hurt another person, whether through intimidation, verbal acts or bodily threats. The terms 'violence' and 'abuse' are used interchangeably in this report.

Physical abuse: The exertion of physical force against a child with the intention of hurting or injuring the victim. Physical abuse can occur within the home, in public institutions (schools, police custody) and in public.

Emotional abuse: The pervasive lack of display of love and affection toward a child by an adult entrusted with his care and development, or by another child in a position of authority. This includes constant belittlement, blaming and criticizing, as well as intentionally failing to display emotion to a child, such as not smiling at a child or acknowledging a child's existence by not looking at him or exclusively engaging a child in a closed and confining emotional relationship.

Sexual abuse: Includes sexual penetration, which consists of sexual intercourse with a child; the intentional exposure of a child to sexual activity, such as showing and/or taking sexually explicit or implicit pictures of the child or telling jokes or stories of a sexual nature; tickling in erogenous zones and demanding to be tickled in return. Pressure is usually exerted by an adult or a child in a position of authority. This includes rape and incest. Commercial sexual exploitation also falls under sexual abuse for CHI purposes.

Neglect: The failure of a parental figure, whether intentional or not, to provide a child with the basic needs required for the child's development. Basic needs include food, shelter, clothing, love, affection and appropriate discipline.

Bullying: Usually involves a child being repeatedly picked on, ridiculed and intimidated by another child, other children or adults. Bullying may involve physical, emotional or sexual abuse. Cyber-bullying is also included in this category, whereby the abuse occurs through the Internet (including social media).

Data collection

The helpline utilizes a call-tracking database to capture some initial information about calls that are received, including:

1. Type of call (responsive versus non-responsive);
2. Nature of concern (using a set of standardized categories);
3. Details about the caller (e.g., age, sex, relationship to the child);
4. Details about the reported child (e.g., age, sex, address, educational status);
5. Details about the reported child's primary caregiver (e.g., age, sex, relationship to the child);
6. Details about the alleged perpetrator (e.g., age, sex, contact info, relationship to the child); and
7. Details of the reported incident (e.g., duration of abuse, child's immediate safety, date and time of latest incident, place of incident, reports to other services).

The form also includes space to draft a narrative to describe the case in greater detail, including the counsellor's assessment of the level of concern for the child's immediate welfare and the initial care plan provided to the caller. Some of the above fields of information are mandatory (such as the child's name, age and sex) while others are not (such as details pertaining to the perpetrator).

² Child Helpline International (2014). *Glossary of Terms*. Updated January 2014. Retrieved from:

³ United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, Article 1.

The drop-in centres primarily utilize a paper-based form to capture initial information about cases that are received and input information into an electronic database. The forms record the following information:

1. Case status (new versus previously closed and being reopened);
2. Child orphan status;
3. Details about the reported child (e.g., age, sex, address, school, caregiver);
4. Details about who is making the referral;
5. Description of the reported incident (including nature of the problem using a set of standardized categories);
6. Details of the reported incident (e.g., date, place, any earlier disclosure);
7. Details about the reported perpetrator (e.g., sex, age, relationship to child);
8. Assessment of the level of concern for the child's immediate welfare; and
9. Initial care plan.

For those cases requiring follow-up by a social worker, a number of additional forms are also completed pertaining to assessment (e.g., child's developmental needs, challenges, strengths and parenting capacity), care plans, referrals, follow-ups and home visits etc.

When a report about abuse is received, either the helpline or drop-in centre social worker assigns a primary category (type) of abuse for which the report is being made. Social workers can, however, choose multiple categories of abuse if the child has experienced more than one type of victimization.

Construction of case categories

Cases received by Childline are categorized according to whether the child was subjected (or suspected of being subjected) to different forms of abuse (hereafter referred to as 'reports of abuse') or whether the child contacted Childline for reasons other than to report abuse (hereafter referred to as 'children in need').

There are three main issues related to consistency with regards to the categories used for both reports of abuse and children in need. The first issue pertains to differences across years, particularly for the period from 2011 to 2013, such that some categories used for earlier years are not included in more recent ones. The second issue is related to differences in the categories included in the helpline database versus those included in the drop-in centre database. The final issue is that some modification/recoding of categories has occurred throughout the years. For instance, up until 2014, child marriage cases were classified as sexual abuse.

Beginning in 2014, Childline attempted to harmonize the categories used for reports received through the helpline and drop-in centres.

The table in the Annex summarizes the categories used for both abuse reports and children in need in the helpline and drop-in databases for each year between 2011 and 2014. In some instances with the children in need reports, categories were combined/recoded in order to maintain comparability across the two databases and years. For this analysis, no categories were excluded even if they existed in only one database or only for databases of earlier years.

Data extraction

Childline currently maintains separate databases for those reports received via the helpline versus those received at the drop-in centres. These databases (aggregated to the national level in the case of helpline data and to both national and centre location in the case of drop-in data) were shared by Childline for the years 2011 to 2014.

The helpline database contains the number of reports received each year by month (further disaggregated by whether the call was received by the Harare or Bulawayo call centre) and by case category (further disaggregated by child sex and age, when available). The drop-in centre database contains the number of reports received each year (aggregated from monthly counts) by centre location and by case category (further disaggregated by sex).

Relevant data from both databases was extracted and compiled into a single master database in Excel to facilitate analysis.

Analysis

Descriptive statistics

Basic cross-tabulations (i.e., counts of reports) and distributions of all variables relevant to the research questions were computed to describe the 'current' situation using 2014 data from the combined helpline/drop-in centre database.

Trends analysis

Data collected between 2011 and 2014 were compared to explore patterns in the data over time.

Limitations:

- Data were extracted from existing databases from the helpline and drop-in centres, and the analysis was constrained by the availability of only a few key variables.
- The analysis presents a description of reported cases of abuse within a given time period as well as characteristics of children who were reported to Childline and therefore should not be taken as a measure of the prevalence of child abuse in Zimbabwe during the reported time periods.
- No inferences or generalizations about the experiences of abused children can be made on the basis of the analysis since the data represent a small and particular subset of all children who have been victims of abuse; namely those whose experiences have been reported to Childline. In addition, some geographical areas of the country enjoy better access to Childline's services, therefore there may be a bias towards children's experiences from those parts of the country.

- In the case of reports about abuse, data used for the analyses refer only to the primary type of abuse reported to Childline. Therefore, caution should be used when interpreting the findings since some children may be victims of more than one type of abuse.
- Data are cross-sectional in nature and therefore only present a 'snapshot' of a moment in time.
- Data on the age of the child was only available for those reports received via the helpline since Childline experiences significant challenges with capturing this information for cases that come in via the drop-in centres. Therefore, the combined database includes reports about children aged 0-17 years received by the helpline and all cases (possibly including some about adults) received by the drop-in centres. However, upon speaking to Childline staff, it can be safely assumed that around 95 per cent of reports received by the drop-in centres are in reference to children.
- Data quality was subject to the following conditions: 1) the accuracy of the information provided to Childline during the reporting process; and 2) the degree to which Childline was able to successfully and accurately document information on the reports received.

A note on the data interpretation: In this report, some percentages are presented as X% (n=a), where 'n' refers to the actual number of reports which constituted the numerator for the calculations, e.g., 10 per cent (n=1,000) refers to 10 per cent or 1,000 reports of children.

FINDINGS

Current situation

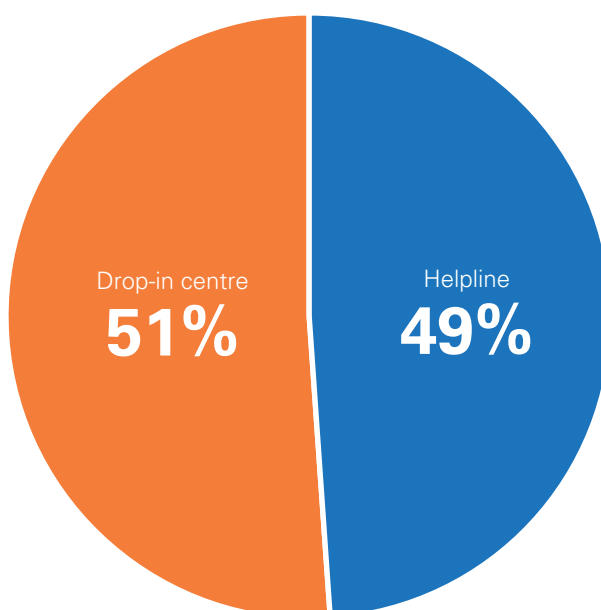
In 2014, Childline received a total of 15,446 reports through both its helpline and its 31 drop-in centres located across the country. Of these, 49 per cent (n=7,524) were received via the helpline while 51 per cent (n=7,922) came in through one of the drop-in centre locations (see Figure 1).

Of these 15,446 reports, slightly more than half (54 per cent; n=8,281) were reports of abuse,⁴ a rate of 123.9 reports per 100,000 children. The remaining 46 per cent (n=7,155) were reports of “children in need,”⁵ a rate of 106.9 per 100,000 children.⁶

As shown in Figure 2, of the approximately 8,000 reports of abuse received in 2014, slightly more than one

in three (39 per cent; n=3,224) were about sexual abuse, followed by neglect (25 per cent; n=2,032), physical abuse (22 per cent; n=1,850), emotional abuse (12 per cent; n=1,031) and bullying (2 per cent; n=154). The fact that forms of sexual abuse are the most commonly reported is in line with other data indicating its relatively widespread existence in the country, particularly among adolescents.⁷ Research literature has linked poverty, political and economic instability as well as traditional cultural and religious beliefs in patriarchy as being some of the main drivers behind child sexual abuse in Zimbabwe.⁸ The fact that some forms of violence such as emotional abuse are less frequently reported to Childline might be partly due to difficulties with defining what constitutes as emotional abuse given that it tends to be culturally-driven and is less often recognized as a form of violence against children, particularly when perpetrated by parents or other caregivers.⁹

Figure 1. Percentage distribution of reports received by Childline in 2014, by source of the report



⁴ This includes reports of physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional abuse, neglect and bullying.

⁵ This comprises all reasons other than abuse. For example, reports related to commercial exploitation (including domestic child labour), child marriage, problems with friends or parents, substance abuse, academic problems, health concerns, suicide etc.

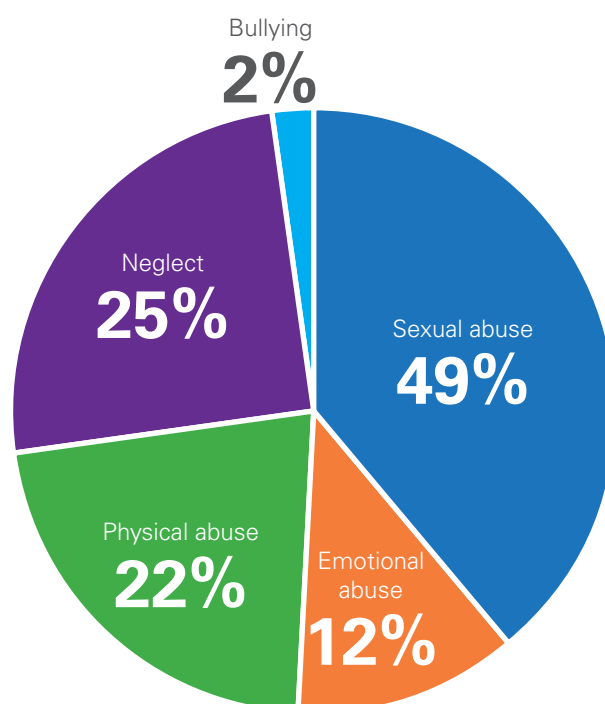
⁶ Rates were calculated based on the population of children aged 0-17 years old in Zimbabwe in 2014 (6,691,800) from: United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division (2015). *World Population Prospects: The 2015 Revision*, CD-ROM Edition.

⁷ See, for example: United Nations Children's Fund, A Statistical Snapshot of Violence against Adolescent Girls, UNICEF, New York, 2014; Zimbabwe National Statistics Agency, United Nations Children's Fund and Collaborating Centre for Operational Research and Evaluation, *National Baseline Survey on Life Experiences of Adolescents, 2011*, Harare, 2013.

⁸ For a comprehensive review of research literature on the drivers of violence against children in Zimbabwe, see: United Nations Children's Fund and the University of Edinburgh, *A Systematic Review of the Drivers of Violence Affecting Children: Country Report*, The Multicountry Study on the Drivers of Violence Affecting Children Series, UNICEF Innocenti OoR, Italy (in press).

⁹ United Nations Children's Fund, *Hidden in Plain Sight: A statistical analysis of violence against children*, UNICEF, New York, 2014.

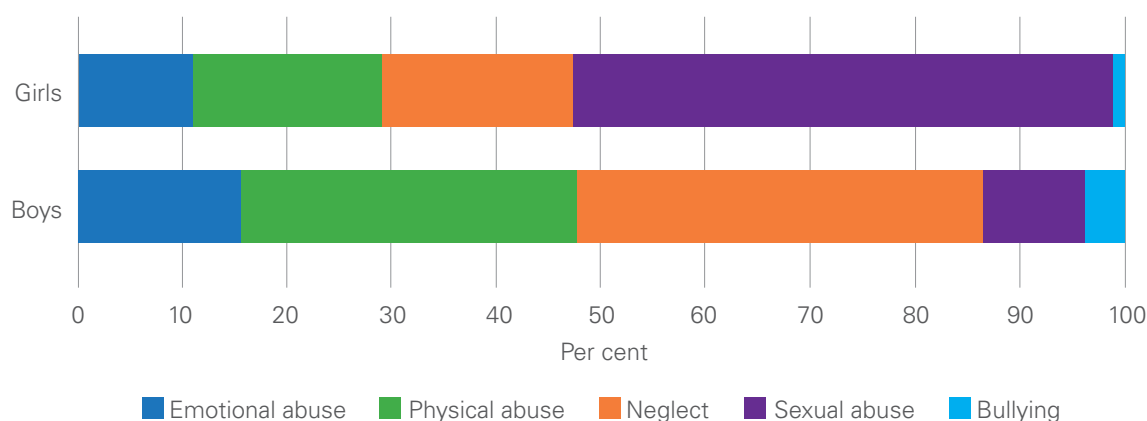
Figure 2. Percentage distribution of abuse reports received by Childline in 2014, by type of abuse reported



One of the most striking findings was the proportion of girls reported to have experienced some form of abuse as compared to boys. Among all reports of abuse, around two in three (70 per cent; n=5,780) were reports about girls compared to one in three about boys (30 per cent; n=2,511). This finding, however, needs to be interpreted in light of the relatively well-documented pattern of underreporting of incidents of violence and abuse against males, in particular.¹⁰ The available data also showed distinct differences in the types of abuse reported by child sex (see Figure 3). Among girls reported to have experienced some form of abuse, the majority were reported as having experienced sexual

abuse (52 per cent; n=2,981) followed by physical abuse and neglect (both 18 per cent; n=1,043 for physical abuse and n=1,057 for neglect). Among boys reported to have experienced abuse, the largest proportion were reported for reasons of neglect (39 per cent; n=975), followed by physical abuse (32 per cent, n=807). By comparison, only 10 per cent (n=243) of reports about boys were related to sexual abuse. However, it is not possible to know to what extent these observed differences are related to actual variations in patterns of risk exposure by sex as opposed to underreporting about violence among males, especially when it comes to certain forms like sexual abuse.¹¹

Figure 3. Percentage distribution of girls and boys reported to Childline for experiences of abuse in 2014, by type of abuse reported



¹⁰ See, for example: Finkelhor, D. (1994). The International Epidemiology of Child Sexual Abuse. *Child Abuse & Neglect*, 18(5), 409-417.

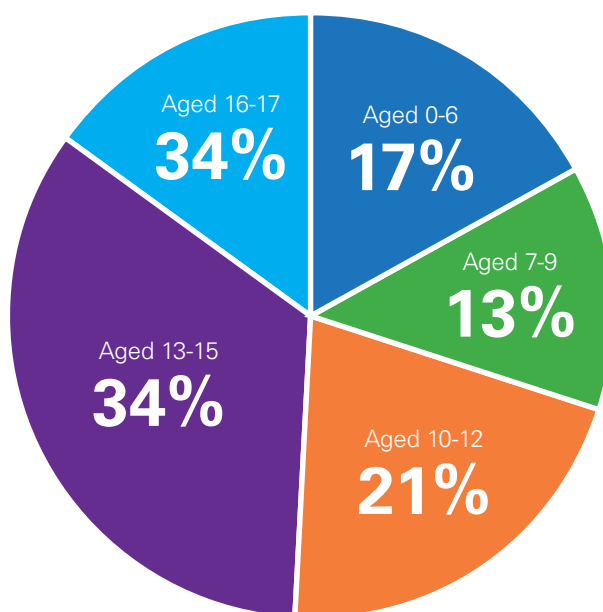
¹¹ For an example specific to Zimbabwe, see: Brakarsh, J. (2003). *The Victim Friendly Courts System in Zimbabwe: A Holistic Approach to Child Sexual Abuse & HIV Prevention*. DFID Resource Centre for Sexual and Reproductive Health. John Snow International, London: UK.

Age disaggregation of children reported to the helpline

As was mentioned in the limitations section, data on the age of the child reported was only available for those reports received via the helpline since Childline experiences significant challenges with capturing this information for cases that come in via the drop-in centres. Therefore, it was only possible to explore age disaggregated data among reports made to the helpline. It is important to note here that these data refer to the child's age at the time of reporting and is not necessarily the same as his/her age at the time the reported incident of abuse occurred.

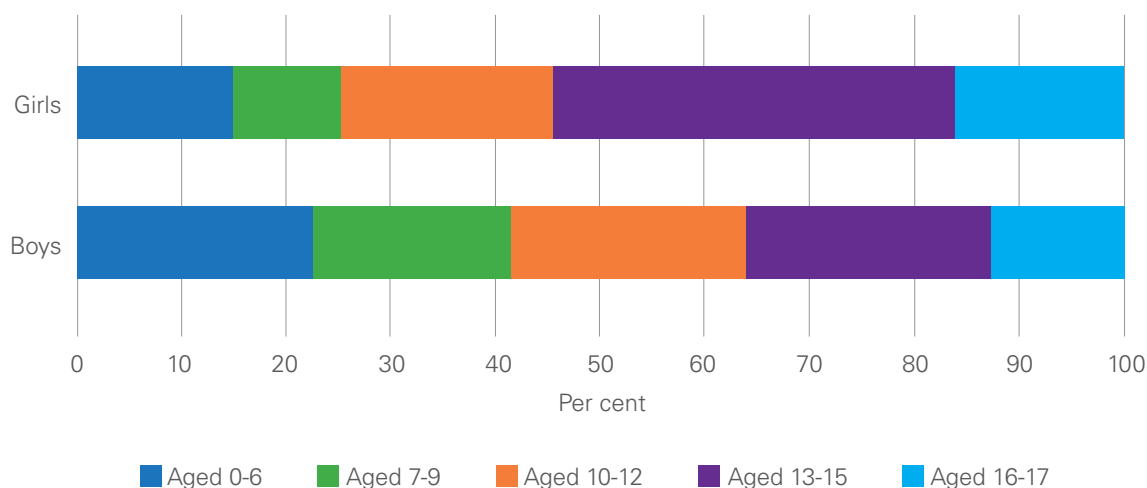
As can be seen in Figure 4, among reports of abuse received by the helpline for both sexes in 2014 for which information on the age of the reported child was available (n=4,199), the largest proportion were reports about children aged 13-15 years old (34 per cent, n=1,429), followed by 10 to 12-year-olds (21 per cent, n=874), 0 to 6-year-olds (17 per cent, n=717), 16 to 17-year-olds (15 per cent, n=637) and 7 to 9-year-olds (13 per cent; n=542).

Figure 4. Percentage distribution of abuse reports received by Childline's helpline in 2014, by age of the child reported



Note: Figures in this chart have been rounded and may not add up to 100 per cent.

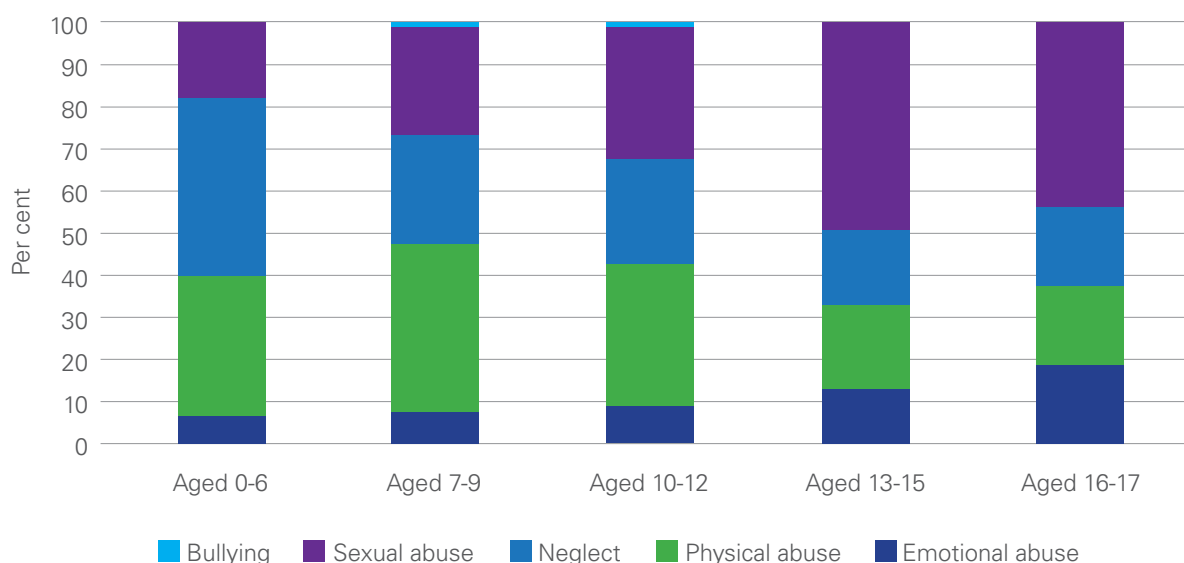
Figure 5. Percentage distribution of girls and boys reported to Childline's helpline for experiences of abuse in 2014, by age group



There were also some sex differences in reporting of abuse between age groups. Figure 5 shows that around three out of four (75 per cent, n=2,221) of the reports of abuse involving girls were about those in their early and mid-adolescence years (aged 10-17 years old) while the remaining proportion (25 per cent, n=749) were about girls in childhood between the ages of 0 to 9 years old. On the other hand, around half of the reports of abuse about boys (42 per cent, n=510) were made about those in childhood with the other roughly half (59 per cent, n=719) being about those in the adolescent years. Differences in reporting about abuse by sex are particularly evident among the age group 13-17 years old, with 55 per cent (n=1,622) of reports about girls being made about this age group compared to 36 per cent (n=444) of reports about boys. An understanding of gender norms in the country might be one potential lens through which to interpret this finding. For instance, it might be that reporting incidents of abuse against boys in adolescence is less common because such experiences are not seen as violence. Here again, however, some degree of caution should be used when interpreting these findings of sex differences given that there were about half as many reports of abuse about boys in the sample as there were about girls.

There were some notable differences in the types of abuse reported across age groups. As shown in Figure 6, a much larger proportion of the reports received about older age groups of children 13-17 years old were about sexual abuse as compared to reports about those aged 12 and under. In fact, 64 per cent (n=972) of the reports of sexual abuse were about children between the ages of 13 and 17 years. On the other hand, neglect and physical abuse were less commonly reported about older age groups of children than about younger ones. Of the reports made about physical abuse and neglect, 65 per cent (n=752) and 64 per cent (n=663), respectively, were about children aged 12 and under. These findings are consistent with the literature, indicating that the types of violence that children are exposed to changes as they age, and that the risks associated with different types of violence vary across developmental stages.¹²

Figure 6. Percentage distribution of reports about children aged 0-6 years, 7-9 years, 10-12 years, 13-15 years and 16-17 years received by Childline's helpline in 2014, by type of abuse reported



¹² United Nations Children's Fund, Hidden in Plain Sight: A statistical analysis of violence against children, UNICEF, New York, 2014.

Patterns of type of abuse by age group were also found to differ by sex. Among reports about boys, the largest proportions were related to physical abuse and neglect, across all age groups (see Figure 7a), although the share of reports attributable to these two forms of abuse became smaller as the boys' ages increased. Additionally, reports about sexual and emotional abuse contributed to a larger proportion of the total reports received among older age groups of boys (13-17 years old) as compared to younger boys (0-12 years old).

A significant proportion of the reports received about girls across all ages were in relation to sexual abuse (see Figure 7b). However, the share of reports attributable to sexual abuse increased substantially as girls' ages increased, with one in four (25 per cent) reports for girls 0-6 years old being made compared to more than one in two (59 per cent) reports for girls 13-15 years old. As was the case with boys, reports about both physical abuse and neglect contributed to a smaller share of the total reports received among older age groups of girls as compared to their younger counterparts.

Figure 7a. Percentage distribution of reports about boys aged 0-6 years, 7-9 years, 10-12 years, 13-15 years and 16-17 years received by Childline's helpline in 2014, by type of abuse reported

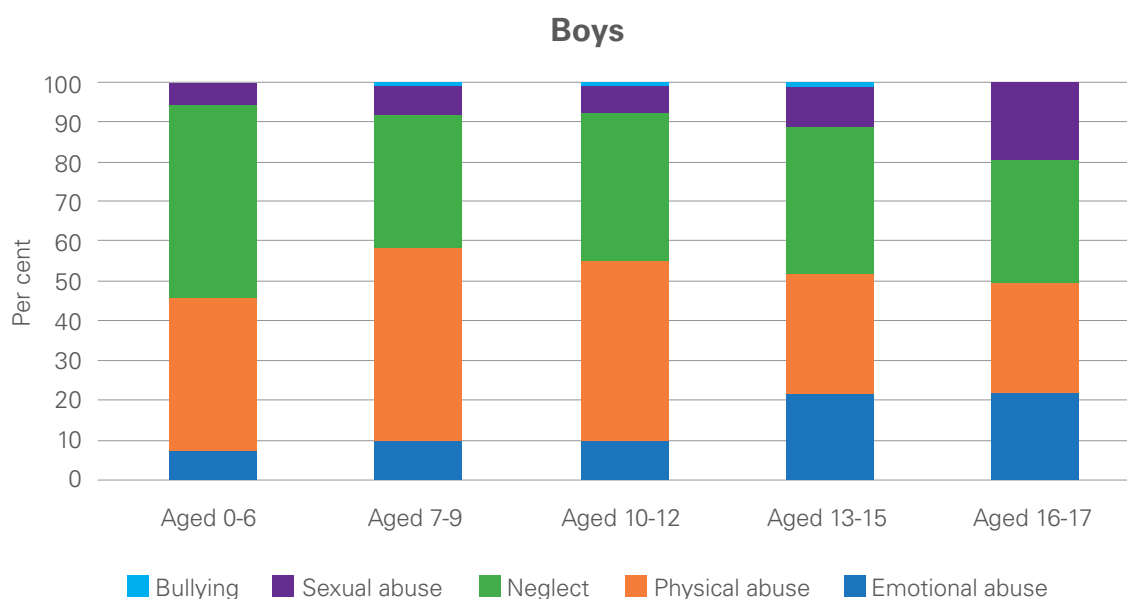
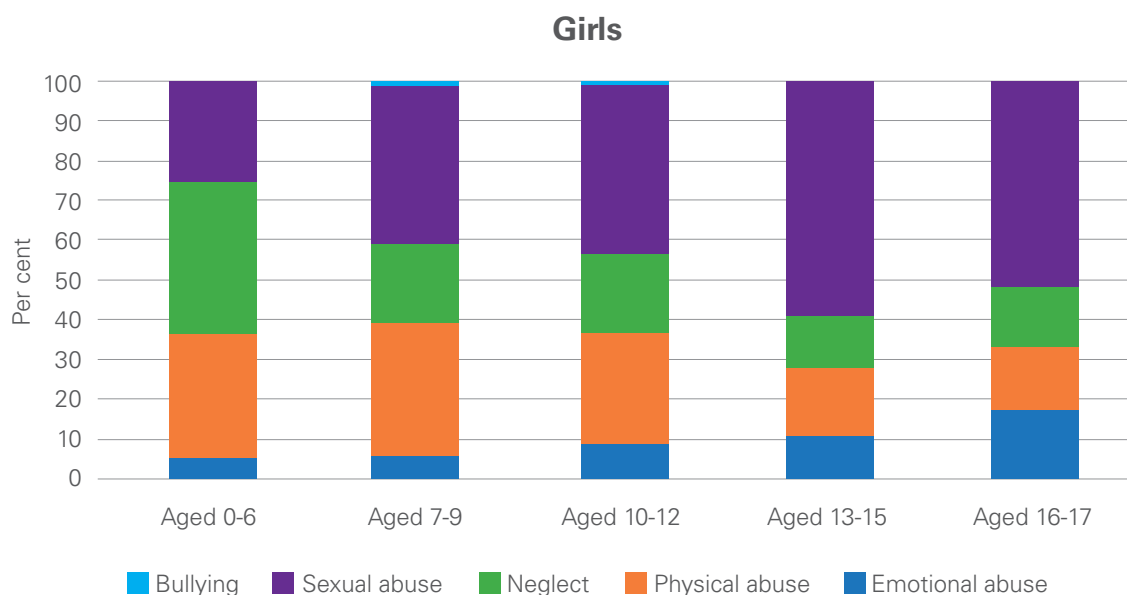


Figure 7b. Percentage distribution of reports about girls aged 0-6 years, 7-9 years, 10-12 years, 13-15 years and 16-17 years received by Childline's helpline in 2014, by type of abuse reported



Disaggregation by drop-in centre location

As was mentioned in the methods section, data on children reported to one of the drop-in centres was also disaggregated by location of the centre.

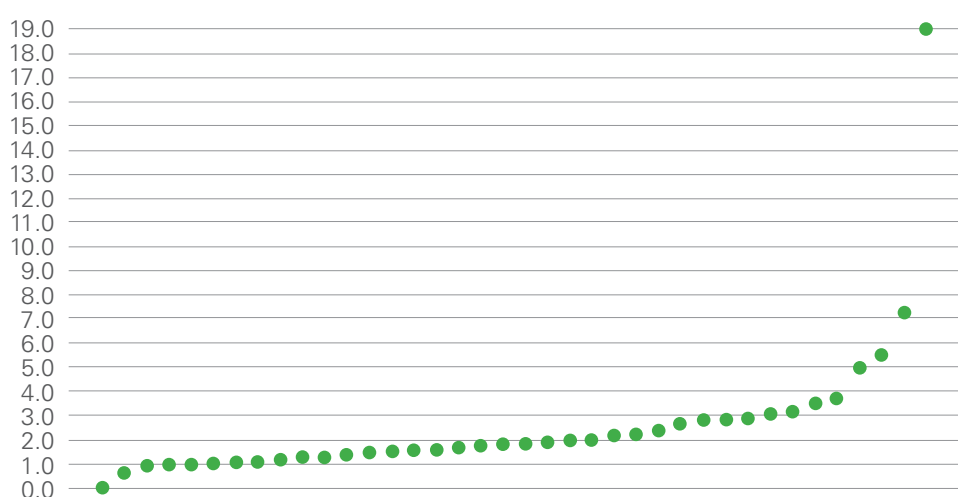
The largest number of reports received by drop-in centres for both sexes in 2014 came from the Kwekwe location (n=824), representing 10 per cent of all reports received by the drop-in centres that year. The second largest number of reports received in 2014 were made to the Mutoko location (n=721), representing 9 per cent of all reports received that year. The Beitbridge location received the fewest number of reports in 2014 (n=1). When it came to reports of abuse specifically, the Rotten Raw Courts drop-in centre received the most in 2014 with 469 (representing 12 per cent of all abuse cases receive by Childline that year).

Interestingly, of the total 1,264 reports of abuse against boys that were received by all the drop-in centres in 2014, the largest number were from the Kwekwe location (n=149). Of the total 2,780 reports of abuse against girls received by Childline's drop-in centers in 2014, the largest number were from the Rotten Raw Courts location (n=365). There were also some rather striking variations across drop-in centre locations in the number of reports received by sex (see Figure 8). For instance, at the Warren Park, Beitbridge and Chimanimani centres, boys and girls were equally likely to be reported for abuse. At the House of Smiles and

Mufakose centres, boys were slightly more likely to be reported for abuse while at most of the remaining drop-in centres, reports of abuse for girls was more likely than those about boys,¹³ with some especially pronounced sex differences noted at a few centres. For instance, at the Rusape location, girls were 19 times more likely to be reported for abuse than boys and at the Courts drop-in centres, girls were around seven times more likely to be reported for abuse than boys.¹⁴ The largest sex difference in abuse reports received by the drop-in centres was found at the United Bulawayo Hospital location, where girls were 56 times more likely to be reported for abuse than boys.¹⁵ A closer look at the data reveals that all but four of the 225 reports of abuse received about girls at this location were with regards to sexual abuse, which might not be altogether surprising given that the centre is located in a hospital setting.

Patterns in the types of abuse reported also differed by drop-in centre location.¹⁶ For instance, at the Eastlea, Rotten Raw Courts, Gweru, Bulawayo, United Bulawayo Hospital, Tredgold Courts and Chipinge locations, over half of the total reports of abuse received were in relation to sexual abuse. In places like House of Smiles, Mufakose and Tsholotsho, over half of all abuse reports received in 2014 were about neglect, while at the Chitungwiza, Dzivarasekwa, Hatcliff, Kuwadzana, Marondera and Chimanimani centres, at least one in three reports of abuse were about emotional violence. At the Glenview, Gweru, Pumula and Kwekwe locations, at least in one every four reports about abuse received were related to physical abuse.

Figure 8. Ratio of children reported for abuse to one of Childline's drop-in centres in 2014, by sex (girls over boys)



Notes: Each dot represents a drop-in centre location. A ratio of 1.0 (0.95-1.04) indicates that reports of abuse in the two groups (girls/boys) are equal. Data for some drop-in centers bear some level of uncertainty since the ratios have been calculated based on a small number of reports that would affect the significance of the ratios.

¹³ It should be noted here again that this is largely driven by the fact that the number of reports of abuse received about girls overall is much higher than those received about boys.

¹⁴ These figures bear some level of uncertainty since they have been calculated based on a small number of reports about boys that would affect the significance of the ratios.

¹⁵ Excluded from Figure 8 for clarity; this figure bears some level of uncertainty since it has been calculated based on a small number of reports about boys that would affect the significance of the ratio.

¹⁶ Drop-in centres with less than a total of 25 reports of abuse received in 2014 were excluded from the analysis.

Trends

The availability of Childline data from the years 2011 to 2014 allowed for an exploration of changes over time.

In 2011 and 2014, Childline received a total of 12,759 and 15,446 reports, respectively, through both its helpline and its drop-in centres. This represents a 21 per cent increase in the number of reports received over the four-year period.

Of the reports received in 2011, 22 per cent (n=2,856) were received via the helpline while this proportion rose to 49 per cent (n=7,524) in 2014 (see Figure 9). This represents a 163 per cent increase in reports received by the helpline from 2011 to 2014. Childline staff attributed

this change partly to awareness-raising campaigns about the helpline as well as recent increases in the number of counsellors available to respond to incoming calls. On the other hand, 76 per cent (n=9,903) of reports in 2011 came in through drop-in centre locations compared to only 51 per cent (n=7,922) in 2014, representing a 20 per cent decrease in reports received by drop-in centres over this time period.

Available data reveal that there have been no significant changes in the types of reports received by Childline over the four-year period (see Figure 10). The proportion of reports received about abuse remained relatively constant from 2011 to 2014, representing about half of all reports received each year. The other half of the reports were in relation to “children in need”.

Figure 9. Percentage distribution of reports received by Childline in 2011 to 2014, by source of the report

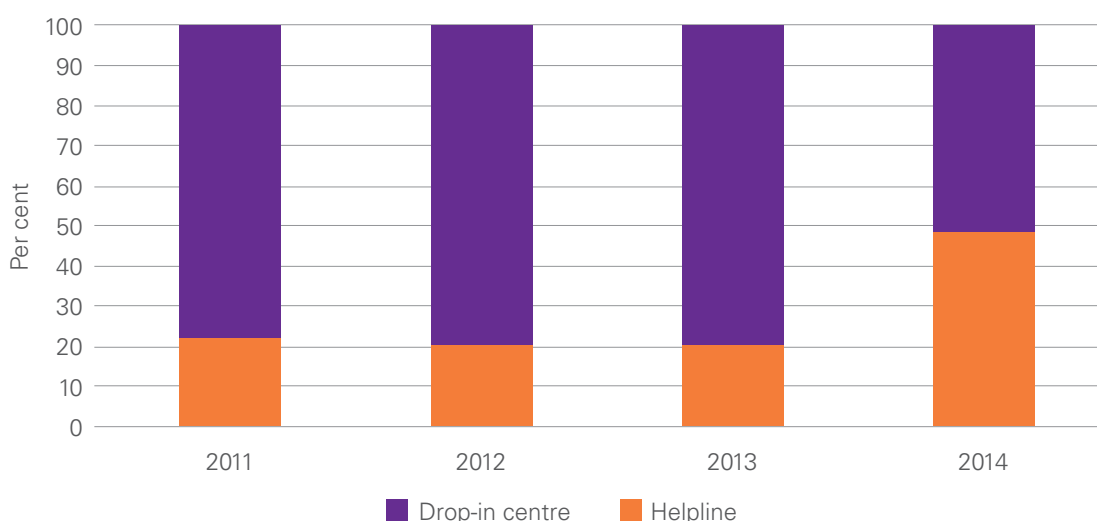
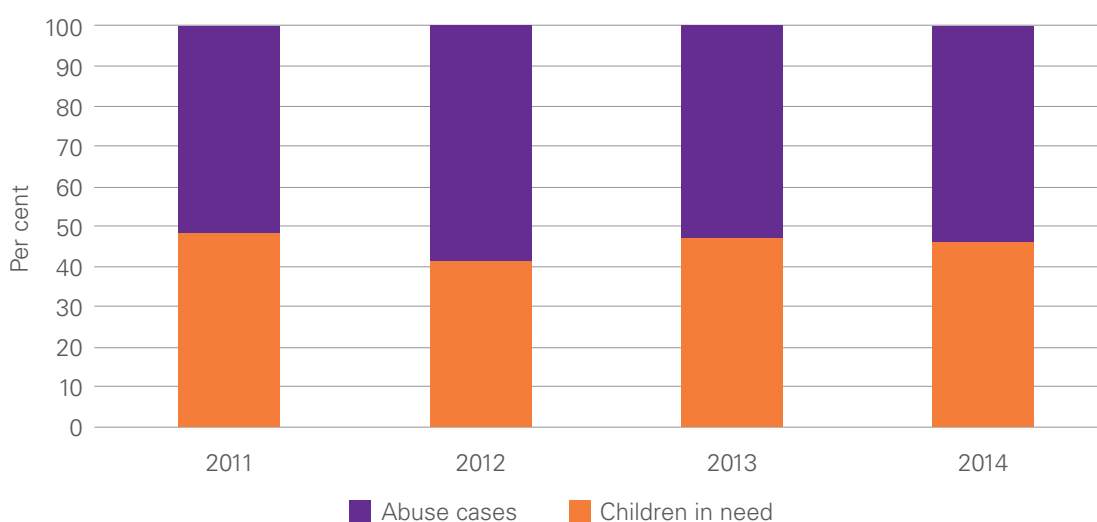


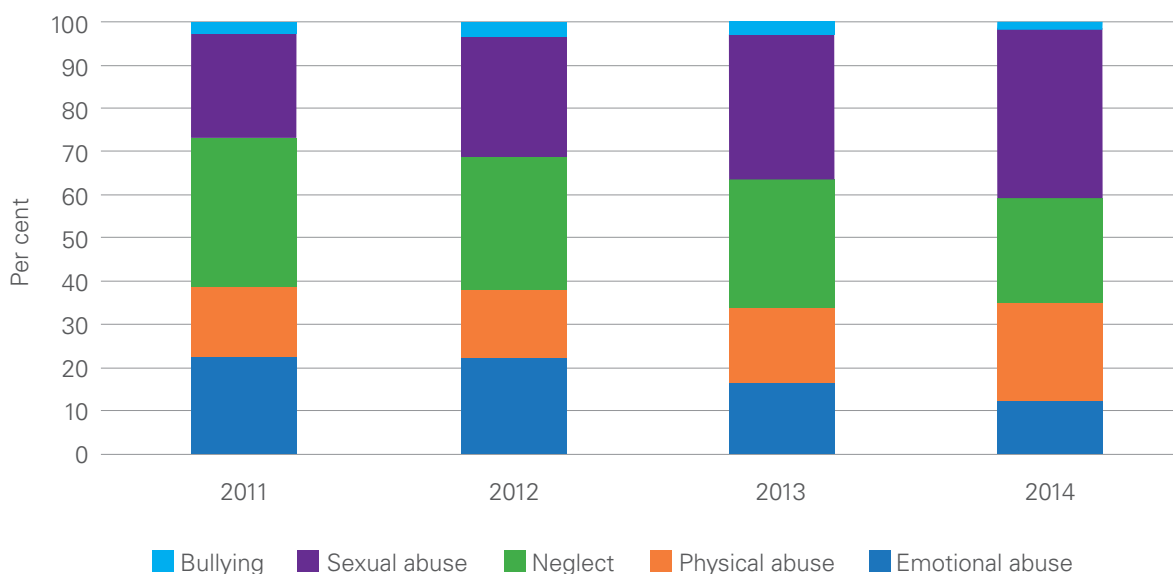
Figure 10. Percentage distribution of reports received by Childline in 2011 to 2014, by type of report



Of the reports about abuse received in 2011, 22 per cent (n=1,472) were about emotional abuse while this proportion fell to 12 per cent (n=1,031) in 2014 (see Figure 11). This represents a 30 per cent decrease in reports received about emotional abuse from 2011 to 2014. On the other hand, 24 per cent (n=1,609) of the reports of abuse in 2011 were made about sexual abuse compared to 39 per cent (n=3,224) in 2014, representing a 100 per cent increase in reports about sexual abuse received by Childline over a four-year period. Reports

about physical abuse also showed an increase during this time, rising from 16 per cent (n=1,052) of abuse reports in 2011 to 22 per cent (n=1,850) of abuse reports in 2014, a 76 per cent increase. Reports of both neglect and bullying showed only small decreases from 2011 to 2014. It is important to note here that these observed increases and decreases cannot be interpreted as actual changes in the incidence of different types of abuse during the reported time periods, but rather provide an indication that the reporting of different forms of abuse to Childline has shown some changes over time.

Figure 11. Percentage distribution of reports of abuse received by Childline in 2011 to 2014, by type of abuse reported

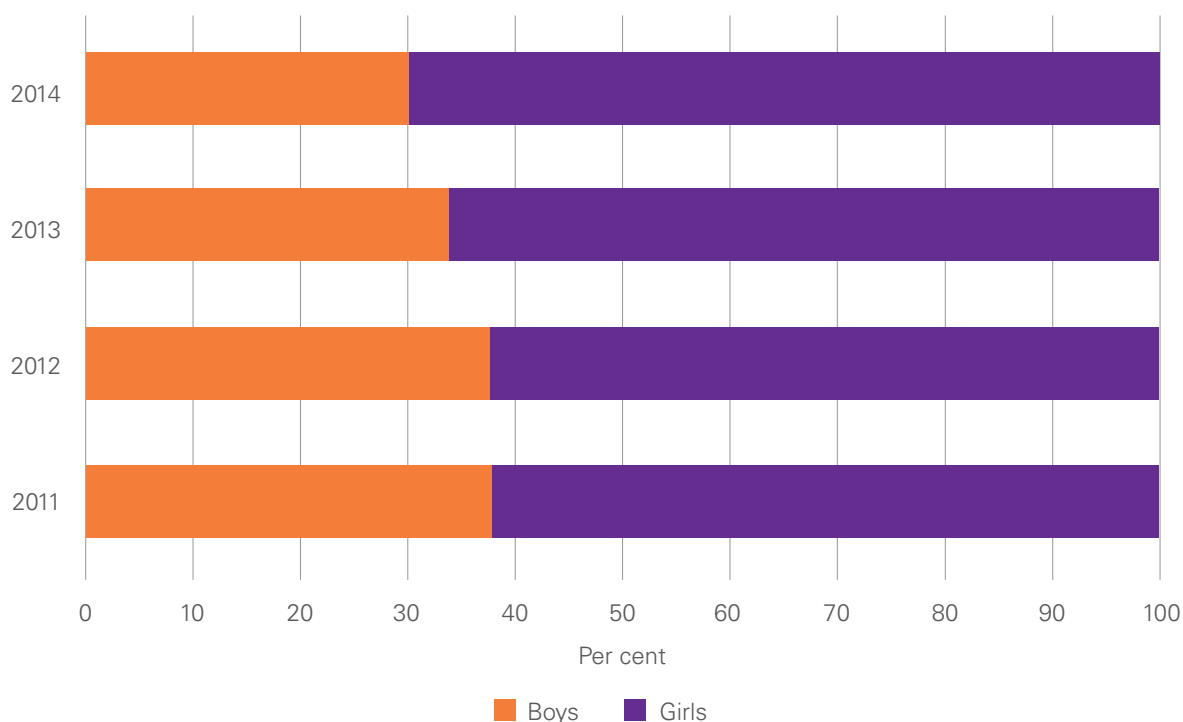


When it comes to reports about abuse received according to child sex, from 2011 to 2014, the proportion referring to girls was consistently higher than those referring to boys (see Figure 12).¹⁷ Among reports of abuse made about boys, there was no significant change in the number of reports received over the four-year period. Among reports of abuse among girls, there was a 41 per cent increase in the number of reports received from 2011 to 2014. Here again, this increase does not necessarily reflect an actual change in the incidence of abuse among girls, but rather that reporting to Childline of real or suspected incidents of abuse against girls has increased over this time period.

There were also some notable differences in the types of abuse reported by sex from 2011 to 2014. Among reports of abuse about boys, the largest change was

with regards to physical abuse: Childline had a 70 per cent increase in the number of reports about this form of abuse against boys in 2014 as compared to 2011. There was also a 35 per cent increase in the number of reports about sexual abuse against boys from 2011 to 2014 and a 34 per cent decrease in the number of reports received about emotional abuse against boys. Among reports of abuse made about girls between 2011 and 2014, there was an 80 per cent increase in the number of reports of physical abuse and a 109 per cent increase in the number of reports of sexual abuse. The number of reports about emotional abuse registered a 27 per cent decline among girls from 2011 to 2014. Once again, these findings do not necessarily reflect actual changes in the incidence of different types of abuse among girls and boys. They rather provide an indication that reports to Childline of certain categories of abuse against girls and boys have changed over time.

Figure 12. Percentage distribution of reports of abuse received by Childline in 2011 to 2014, by sex of the reported child



¹⁷ See earlier cautions regarding the interpretation of observed sex differences.

ANNEX

Category	Availability in drop-in centre database				Availability in helpline database				Recoding (if applicable)
	2011	2012	2013	2014	2011	2012	2013	2014	
Physical	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Sexual	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Emotional	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Neglect	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Bullying	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Witness to violence	X	X	X	X				X	
Corporal punishment								X	Recoded as physical
Child headed family	X	X							
Abandoned	X	X	X	X					
Commercial exploitation	X	X			X	X	X		
Child prostitution			X	X				X	Recoded as commercial exploitation
Domestic child labour			X	X				X	Recoded as commercial exploitation
Child trafficking	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Children used for begging			X	X					Recoded as commercial exploitation
Custody	X	X	X	X				X	
Guardianship					X	X	X		Recoded as custody
Shelter	X	X	X						Recoded as homelessness
Homelessness				X	X	X	X	X	
Financial	X	X							Recoded as financial aid/school fees
Resources and financial aid			X	X				X	Recoded as financial aid/school fees
Financial/school fees					X	X	X		Recoded as financial aid/school fees
School fees			X	X				X	Recoded as financial aid/school fees
HIV/STIs/AIDS	X	X			X	X	X		
Info about AIDS			X	X				X	Recoded as HIV/STIs/AIDS
Access to ART			X	X				X	Recoded as HIV/STIs/AIDS
Sick caregiver			X	X				X	Recoded as HIV/STIs/AIDS
Child infected with HIV/AIDS								X	Recoded as HIV/STIs/AIDS
Legal issues	X	X			X	X	X		
Advice and info (on legal matters)			X	X					Recoded as legal issues
Children in need of legal representation			X	X					Recoded as legal issues
School-based/related issues	X	X			X	X	X		Recoded as school-related issues
Teacher problems			X	X					Recoded as school-related issues
Academic problems			X	X				X	Recoded as school-related issues
School dropout								X	Recoded as school-related issues
Birth certificate/legal	X	X							Recoded as birth registration
Birth registration			X	X				X	
Substance abuse	X	X			X	X	X		
Information about substances and misuse			X	X				X	Recoded as substance abuse

Category	Availability in drop-in centre database				Availability in helpline database				Recoding (if applicable)
	2011	2012	2013	2014	2011	2012	2013	2014	
Addiction			X	X					Recoded as substance abuse
Alcohol/drug abuse								X	Recoded as substance abuse
Drug abuse	X	X							Recoded as substance abuse
Disability	X	X	X	X				X	
Sexuality	X	X			X	X	X		
Information about sexuality			X	X				X	Recoded as sexuality
Sexual identity and masturbation			X	X					Recoded as sexuality
Sexual identity								X	Recoded as sexuality
Pregnancy	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Family relationships	X	X			X	X	X		
Maintenance			X	X				X	Recoded as family relationships
Parents in conflict (conflict between parents)			X	X				X	Recoded as family relationships
Parent/child relationship			X	X					Recoded as family relationships
Conflict between parents and child								X	Recoded as family relationships
Psychosocial/mental health	X	X							
Lonely (loneliness)			X	X	X	X	X	X	Recoded as psychosocial/mental health
Fear and anxiety			X	X				X	Recoded as psychosocial/mental health
Suicide (suicidal)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Physical health	X	X							
Concerns about illness			X	X				X	Recoded as physical health
Health issues					X	X	X		Recoded as physical health
Bereavement	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Juvenile delinquency	X	X							Recoded as delinquency
Delinquency					X	X	X		
Delinquent			X	X				X	Recoded as delinquency
Early marriage	X	X							
Child marriage			X	X				X	Recoded as early marriage
Cultural/religion	X	X							
Culture			X	X					Recoded as cultural/religion
Religion			X	X					Recoded as cultural/religion
Discrimination								X	Recoded as cultural/religion
Career guidance	X	X	X	X					
Peer relationships	X	X			X	X	X		Recoded as peer/partner relationships
Problems with friends			X	X				X	Recoded as peer/partner relationships
Partner relationship			X	X				X	Recoded as peer/partner relationships
Other issues	X	X							
Unspecified/other			X	X					Recoded as other issues
Other								X	Recoded as other issues

